

Director
Casey

Feb 2, 1983

PRESS GUIDANCE RE POPE ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATIONS

Following statements are on record:

The President, news conference, Jan. 5, 1983--

"I know that the Italians are investigating and in view of their procedures and their handling of the General Dozier case, I have great confidence in their abilities. But as long as they are investigating, I don't think it would be proper for me to make a comment on this because I would have no information except the same things that all of us know about this."

Question: If it turns out that the Bulgarians and the Russians were behind it, what impact would that have on Soviet-American relations?

The President--

"I think that it certainly would have an effect. I think it would have an effect worldwide and I'd meet that problem when we got to it."

State Department spokesman John Hughes at daily press briefing, Jan. 27--

"...as far as our position is concerned, as far as it impinges on foreign policy, it is an Italian investigation, and they should pursue it. All our evidence is that they are pursuing it, effectively....I think we are certainly awaiting the results of the Italian investigation and being helpful insofar as legally and legitimately what might be asked and required of us. But, no, it's basically an Italian investigation....We're awaiting the results of the Italian investigation and obviously watching it closely."

If asked about newest disclosure of an arrest by the Italians in connection with a planned attempt on the Pope's life when he comes to Milan--

We regard this latest disclosure as further indication of the thorough manner in which the Italians are investigating this entire subject, and the effectiveness of their work, in which -- as the President has said -- we have great confidence, in view of their handling of the General Dozier case. If reports of this latest arrest are correct, it is a despicable development and it would be all the more so if it were found to have a connection in any foreign government.

If asked about reports (for example, Los Angeles Times of Jan. 30 and Marvin Kalb on NBC) that US officials in Rome or elsewhere have actively discouraged reporters from pursuing the issue, or discouraged the Italians in any way--

This is absolutely without foundation and contrary to US government policy which has been stated repeatedly